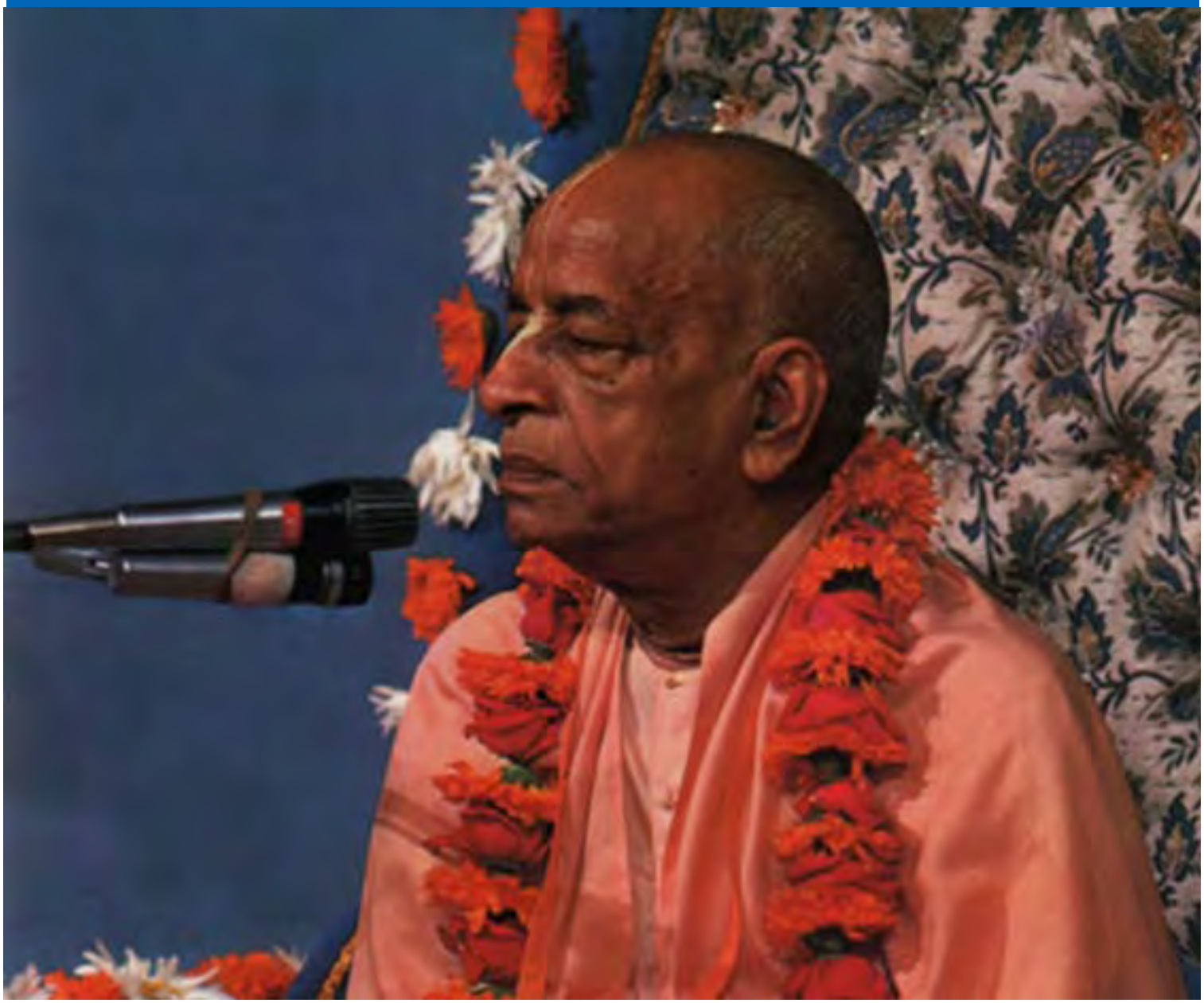
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

"..*Sastra* is never changed. And the *sadhu*... *sadhu* means who follows the *sastras*. He is *sadhu*. He also does not change. *Sadhu, sastra* and *guru*? *Guru* means who follows the *sastra* and *sadhu*. So there are three, the same." (S.P. Lecture 30/11/76,Vrindavana)."

The Sastric Basis for Srila Prabhupada's Continued *Diksa* Status



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The *Sastric* Basis for Srila Prabhupada's Continued *Diksa* Status

By Krishnakant

Iskcon Revival Movement

One common objection to keeping Srila Prabhupada as ISKCON's *diksa* guru, through the use of representatives as outlined in the July 9th letter, is that it is not supported by *'guru, sadhu* and *sastra'.* There are two forms to this objection:

A) It is argued that the July 9th letter alone, whilst admittedly issued by a guru, is not in and of itself sufficient evidence to substantiate the pro-*ritvik* position since it is not supported by *sadhu* and *sastra*.

B) It is also argued that the July 9th letter could not possibly be endorsing the *ritvik* system for after Srila Prabhupada's departure, since to do so would be out of line with **'**guru**,** *sadhu***,** *sastra***'.**

In this paper we shall look closely at a number of objections raised against Srila Prabhupada remaining the *diksa* guru for ISKCON in relation to the eternal principles of guru, *sadhu* and *sastra*. We shall show that the continuance of Srila Prabhupada as the *diksa* guru for ISKCON is in total harmony with these principles, and that specifically with regards Srila Prabhupada's books, it is an unavoidable natural consequence of our theology. We shall demonstrate that Srila Prabhupada's position as the *diksa* guru for ISKCON cannot but prevail if our preaching is properly in line with Srila Prabhupada's teachings.

'Guru, Sadhu and *Sastra'*

One common objection to keeping Srila Prabhupada as ISKCON's *diksa* guru, through the use of representatives as outlined in the July 9th letter, is that it is not supported by 'guru, *sadhu* and *sastra*'. There are two forms to this objection:

A) It is argued that the July 9th letter alone, whilst admittedly issued by a guru, is not in and of itself sufficient evidence to substantiate the pro-*ritvik* position since it is not supported by *sadhu* and *sastra*.

B) It is also argued that the July 9th letter could not possibly be endorsing the *ritvik* system for after Srila Prabhupada's departure, since to do so would be out of line with 'guru, *sadhu*, *sastra*'.

One point which is often missed by those who quote this 'guru, *sadhu*, *sastra*' principle, is that if the guru is bona fide, then his teachings and instructions will automatically be in line with *sadhu* and *sastra*:

> "***Sadhu sastra guru-vakya, tinete kariya aikya. Sastra* is never changed. And the *sadhu... sadhu* means who follows the *sastras*. He is *sadhu*. He also does not change. *Sadhu, sastra* and *guru? Guru* means who follows the *sastra* and *sadhu*. So there are three, the same."**
>
> **(S.P. Lecture 30/11/76, Vrindavana).**"

Since Prabhupada, of course, is such a bona fide guru, a fact that is not disputed by anyone in ISKCON. Thus we know that when we follow the orders of Srila Prabhupada, the bona fide guru, *sastra* and *sadhu* will automatically be satisfied.

If we accept any generally applicable teaching or instruction issued by Srila Prabhupada we are automatically, by definition, situated in line with *sadhu* and *sastra*. Such teachings and instructions, when issued by a bona fide guru, are all 'vedic version', *sastric* or as good as scriptural evidence (as long as we only accept a *'mukhya vritti',* or face-meaning interpretation of them) and are thus accepted by all genuine *sadhus* as proper and sublime. It is thus not necessary to try and satisfy each of these three elements separately. To argue, as some have done, that we must check Srila Prabhupada's teachings against the opinions of other *sadhus*, or with some lesser mortal's limited understanding of *sastra*, is tantamount to arguing that Srila Prabhupada is not actually a bona fide guru. After all, only a bogus guru would propose something which was not in line with *sadhu* and *sastra.*

Having established this point, let us now return to (A) and (B) above.

Since the July 9th letter is an order issued by our bona fide guru, objection (A) can immediately be seen to be false. We know that whatever Srila Prabhupada ordered us to do in the July 9th letter would automatically be in line with guru, *sadhu* and *sastra*.

Furthermore, we can know if a teaching is against *sadhu* and *sastra* simply by testing if it violates the teachings of the guru. Since, thus far, no one has been able to locate a single teaching or general instruction from Srila Prabhupada that the continued application of the *ritvik* system would contravene, the *ritvik* system cannot be against 'guru, *sadhu* and *sastra*'. Thus objection (B) is also shown to be false..

Ritvik 'Philosophy' is not in Srila Prabhupada's Books.

The above is a common objection to the arguments that have been put forward in favour of re-instituting the *ritvik* system. These arguments are sometimes presented by the GBC and their apologists as some sort of alien 'philosophy', or '*vada*', which is nowhere to be found in Srila Prabhupada's books, and is therefore bogus. Although this is just a variation on objection (a) above, since an institutional directive is still the word of the guru, let us nevertheless explore what IS stated in Srila Prabhupada's books. (Please note that in doing this one could also argue that we are satisfying the '*sastra*' part of the 'guru-*sadhu-sastra*' equation, since Srila Prabhupada's books are of course *sastra*.)

Before we can discuss the lack of reference to the so-called '*ritvik* philosophy', we must first define exactly what the '*ritvik* system' involves. There are two principal aspects:

Aspect a) Initiations are performed through the use of representatives with no external involvement from the guru.

Aspect b) The guru gives initiation even though he is not on the same planet as the disciple.

Aspect a)

We know for a fact that aspect a) was implemented and directly approved by Srila Prabhupada before he left the planet, and that this system is not specifically mentioned anywhere in his books. So immediately the argument that the *ritvik* system must be rejected, simply because it is not specifically described in the books, is proven to be false, since its bona fide operation 'pre-*samadhi*' is not mentioned either.

To get around this, the GBC would need to locate the following sastric rule:

'Only post-*samadhi* activities need to be mentioned in the books. Pre-*samadhi* activities can be bona-fide even if they are not mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books.'

Leaving aside the fact that this rule is clearly a concoction, with no authority from Srila Prabhupada, we can immediately point to bona fide 'post-*samadhi*' activities that are also not mentioned in his books, such as managerial details surrounding the functioning of the BBT and the GBC.

To overcome this anomaly the GBC would need to locate the following *sastric* rule:

'Only post-*samadhi* activities that the GBC decide are not managerial need to be specifically mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books to be deemed bona fide.'

The following rule would then logically follow:

'All post-*samadhi* activities that the GBC decide do fall under the category of management can be considered bona-fide, even if they are not mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books.'

Again leaving aside the fact that the above rules are concocted out of thin air, we also now have the added complication that the GBC's classification of what constitutes management may also be inaccurate.

Even accepting this two-level arbitrary system of rules, we know for a fact that the 'method of initiation' employed within ISKCON has in the past fallen under the umbrella of management since the GBC, the ultimate managing authority for ISKCON, passed related resolutions when Srila Prabhupada was still on the planet:

> **"Method of initiating *Sannyasis*."** (Resolution No. 2, March 27th, 1975)

The use of representatives for the 'purpose of performing initiations' within the *ritvik* system is clearly another 'method' which was to be employed within the institution. As shown above, such methodologies were all part and parcel of ISKCON management. This is not in dispute since even to this day ISKCON accept that the issue of when and how initiations can take place is a management issue, to be controlled and voted on by the GBC.

Being that all the above rules are concocted, the GBC's position suffers from self-referential incoherence; since, in claiming to enforce Srila Prabhupada's real instructions on initiation the GBC would need to invent all kinds of intellectual structures which were never once *'instructed'* by Srila Prabhupada! So from every angle of vision, there is no legitimate objection to aspect a) of the *ritvik* system.

Let us look once more at aspect b) of the *ritvik* system.

Aspect b)

The guru gives initiation even though he is not on the same planet as the disciple.

To object to the *ritvik* system in relation to Aspect b) is to assume that the distance between the guru and disciple, at the time of *diksa* initiation, is somehow profoundly significant. Now, in proposing that aspect b) must be explicitly mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books in order for such initiations to be bona-fide, the GBC are proposing yet another concocted *sastric* rule which would go something like:

'In order for any initiation to be bona-fide the distance between the Guru and disciple, at the time of initiation, must be stated in Srila Prabhupada's books.'

By studying Srila Prabhupada's books we find there is no mention of all these possible distances between gurus and disciples at which initiation can legitimately take place. Distance is never an issue as far as *diksa* transmission is concerned. As far as we know no previous *acarya* ever used sophisticated measuring equipment to ensure he was within the correct radius of his prospective disciple's ceremonial fire pit. Again to get around this problem, the GBC would need to come up with the following sastric rule:

'There is no need for specific *sastric* references to all the possible distances between gurus and disciples at which bona fide initiation can be performed, just as long as they are both on the same planet when the ceremony is performed.'

As before, the above inclusive *sastric* allowance for all possible earth bound distances has no mention in Srila Prabhupada's books. Such a rule does not exist in *bhagavat* philosophy.

In fact in the most famous example of *diksa* transmission in Srila Prabhupada's books we have evidence of inter-planetary *diksa*taking place:

> **"The Blessed Lord said: I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvan, and Vivasvan instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Iksvaku."**
>
> **(*Bhagavad Gita*, 4:1)**
>
> **"So there was no difficulty in communicating with Manu or Manu's son Iksvaku. The communication was there, or**

the radio system was so nice that communication could be transferred from one planet to another."

(*BG* lecture 1968)

The GBC would then be forced to concoct the following *sastric* rule:

'Only if the guru and disciple are on different planets at the time of initiation, does there need to be any mention in Srila Prabhupada's books in order for it to be bona fide.'

The above rule is also absent from Srila Prabhupada's books, and hence does not exist in our philosophy. As mentioned previously, the GBC's proclivity to invoke non-existent *sastric* rules is itself an example of self-referential incoherence, and thus renders their position philosophically untenable.

Perhaps the biggest flaw in such an approach, at least as far as clear thinking is concerned, is that the GBC has decided in advance what the truth must be, regardless of what Srila Prabhupada's books actually state. They determine what the books should or should not contain based on what they have already decided is the truth. A vigorous knowledge filter is thus in place, whereby devotees are only seeing in Srila Prabhupada's books the things they are told they should see. For example, many times we have heard the most senior 'gurus' in the movement stating categorically that one must have a 'living guru'; and yet this is never once stated anywhere by Srila Prabhupada. Not only does no-one challenge such statements, but more frighteningly, devotees have actually come to believe that these statements are truth, and that the truth is a lie!

Ultimately we are dealing with institutionalised circular thinking:

In order for X to be correct it must be - or not be in the books.

Then regardless of what is in the books a conclusion is reached:

Since X is - or is not in the books it must be correct.

For our own sanity let us see what is actually stated in Srila Prabhupada's books with regards aspect b). When we do we see that the only consideration for taking initiation is that the spiritual master must be agreeable to the arrangement, and be the current bona fide link in the chain of disciplic succession:

"Unless one is initiated by a bona fide spiritual master, all his devotional activities are useless. A person who is not properly initiated can descend again into the animal species."

(*Madhya* 15:108 (p), quoting *Hari Bhakti Vilasa,* 2.6)

"**...in order to receive the real message of *Srimad Bhagavatam* one should approach the current link, or spiritual master, in the chain of disciplic succession. After being initiated by the proper spiritual master in that chain of succession, one should engage himself in the discharge of *tapasya* in the execution of devotional service"**

(*S.B.* 2.9.7, purport)

There is certainly no mention that the above stated principles must be modified by a consideration of the distance between the guru and disciple at the time of initiation. On the contrary the desire of the guru is the paramount factor:

"As far as the time of *diksa* (initiation) is concerned, everything depends on the position of the guru.[...] If the *sad*-guru, the bona fide spiritual master agrees, one can be initiated immediately, without waiting for a suitable time or place."

(*C.c. Madhya*, 24.331, purport)

Thus the real *sastric* rule is to get initiated by the bona-fide spiritual master who is the current link. This is the actual principle. This is what Srila Prabhupada taught.

The *ritvik* system was set up personally by Srila Prabhupada in order for future devotees to take initiation from him as their bona-fide spiritual master. It is the GBC who have proposed a MODIFYING RESTRICTION to this general principle of taking initiation from the bona-fide spiritual master. Their *sastric* rule in this regards appears to be along the lines of:

'Initiation can only be bona-fide if the distance between the guru and the disciple, at the time of initiation, falls within whatever diameter the planet inhabited by the disciple happens to measure.'

Thus it is this MODIFYING RESTRICTION that needs to have specific mention in Srila Prabhupada's books, not the so-called *ritvik* system, which is simply following the general process of initiation mentioned throughout the books and perpetuated by an explicit final order.

When we look at the curious features of this RESTRICTION, we wonder how anyone could possibly take it seriously:

Notice how the RESTRICTION is so specific - not only in terms of distance - but also in terms of time - only at the exact moment of initiation does IT apply. After the initiation *yajna* takes place, this over-riding need to be within this arbitrary distance, is for some reason no longer relevant.

Notice also how the restriction serves no discernible purpose. The Guru does not need to: perform *pariksa*, accept the disciple,

chant on the beads, give the spiritual name, give the *gayatri mantra* or perform the fire *yajna*. He must simply be existing on the same planet!! And even then ONLY for the exact moment the initiation takes place. Thus the RESTRICTION appears to exist just for the sake of existing - it serves no practical purpose whatsoever.

Further the whole non-material spiritual nature of the Guru-disciple relationship, as described in Srila Prabhupada's books, in any case renders this RESTRICTION absurdly obsolete, as the following quotes will demonstrate:

"So we should associate by vibration, and not by the physical presence. That is real association."

(Lectures *SB*, 68/08/18)

"It is sometimes misunderstood that if one has to associate with persons engaged in devotional service, he will not be able to solve the economic problem. To answer this argument, it is described here that one has to associate with liberated persons not directly, physically, but by understanding, through philosophy and logic, the problems of life."

(*S.B.* 3:31:48)

"Reception of spiritual knowledge is never checked by any material condition."

(*S.B.* (1987 Ed.) 7.7.1.)

"The potency of transcendental sound is never minimised because the vibrator is apparently absent."

(*S.B.* 2.9.8.)

"The spiritual master by his words, can penetrate into the heart of the suffering person and inject knowledge transcendental which alone can extinguish the fire of material existence."

(*S.B.* (1987 Ed) 1.7.22)

"He lives forever by his divine instructions, and the follower lives with him."

(*S.B.* (1962 Ed) Preface)

"The influence of the pure devotee is such that if someone comes to associate with him with a little faith, he gets the chance of hearing about the Lord from authoritative scriptures like Srimad Bhagavatam and Bhagavad Gita. This is the first stage of association with the pure devotee."

(*Nectar of Devotion*, (1982 Ed.), p146)

"Krsna and his representative are the same. Similarly, the spiritual master can be present wherever the disciple wants. A spiritual master is the principle, not the body. Just like a television can be seen in thousands of place by the principle of relay monitoring."

(Letter to Malati, 28/5/68)

"These are not ordinary books. It is recorded chanting. Anyone who reads, he is hearing."

(Letter to Rupanuga Das, 19/10/74)

"Eternal bond between disciple and Spiritual Master begins from the day he hears."

(Letter to Jadurani, 4/9/72)

Since the elements of initiation, or *diksa*, are not in any way related to physical considerations, we thus have clear evidence from Srila Prabhupada's books that physical distance is not a consideration to the successful transmission of *diksa*. Also, by his own practical example, Srila Prabhupada demonstrated that *diksa* could occur without any physical contact either before or after the initiation. So from every angle of vision there is no legitimate objection to aspect b).

To summarise this section, we have shown that any instruction from Srila Prabhupada must automatically be in line with guru, *sadhu* and *sastra* since he is a bona fide spiritual master. We have also shown that the two principal aspects of the *ritvik* system do not in any case violate anything in Srila Prabhupada's books, indeed the system is fully supported by the basic principles of *guru tattva* elucidated therein.

What Initiation System Does Srila Prabhupada's Books Support?

In their attempt to denigrate the *ritvik* system devotees often claim that only the M.A.S.S., is fully sanctioned in Srila Prabhupada's books. In this section we shall look closely at precisely what system, if any, is alluded to in Srila Prabhupada's teachings, and see if it is compatible or not with the continued application of the *ritvik* system. When one studies Srila Prabhupada's books the following points become apparent:

The procedures surrounding initiation in ISKCON are only specifically mentioned 3 times in Srila Prabhupada's books. This is of course excluding the numerous references to general principles of guru-disciple relationships, the meaning of initiation, or the

rules and regulations required to be followed. We are only including references that give the specific method for applying and implementing these principles to execute INITIATIONS in ISKCON - in other words the topic at hand. Here are the three occasions:

"Thus in the beginning the students of our Krsna consciousness movement agree to live with devotees, and gradually, having given up four prohibited activities-illicit sex, gambling, meat-eating and intoxication-they become advanced in the activities of spiritual life. When one is found to be regularly following these principles, he is given the first initiation (*Hari-nama*), and he regularly chants at least sixteen rounds a day. Then, after six months or a year, he is initiated for the second time and given the sacred thread with the regular sacrifice and ritual."

(*C.c., Adi* 17:265)

"Due to the necessity of these activities, we do not immediately initiate disciples in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. For six months, a candidate for initiation must first attend *arati* and classes in the *sastras*, practice the regulative principles and associate with other devotees. When one is actually advanced in the *purascarya-vidhi*, he is recommended by the local temple president for initiation. It is not that anyone can be suddenly initiated without meeting the requirements. When one is further advanced by chanting the Hare Krsna *mantra* sixteen rounds daily, following the regulative principles and attending classes, he receives the sacred thread (*brahminical* recognition) after the second six months."

(*C.c., Madhya* 15:108)

"In our Krsna consciousness movement, the requirement is that one must be prepared to give up the four pillars of sinful life-illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling. In Western countries especially, we first observe whether a potential disciple is prepared to follow the regulative principles. Then he is given the name of a Vaisnava servant and initiated to chant the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, at least sixteen rounds daily. In this way the disciple renders devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master or his representative for at least six months to a year. He is then recommended for a second initiation, during which a sacred thread is offered and the disciple is accepted as a bona fide *brahmana*."

(*C.c., Madhya* 24:330)

On each occasion the following identical arrangement is described: The candidate must follow 4 regulative principles and chant 16 rounds for 6 months.

If these requirements are met, he is automatically recommended for initiation by the Temple President.

Then the candidate will automatically become initiated by Srila Prabhupada.

Interestingly the above arrangement is identical to the *ritvik* system.

Step c) above follows from the fact that the books are describing the exact system that was in place when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet - the system in which he was the sole initiator. Thus if we are to properly follow the books we would have to reconstruct the same system that was in place when they were written. That system had Srila Prabhupada as the ONLY INITIATOR. This is identical to the *ritvik* system.

It maybe argued that Srila Prabhupada was only describing the system as it was then, not necessarily the system that was to continue long into the future.

This proposition suffers from the following problems:

There is no mention of this relevancy restriction in the books themselves.

The instructions are given in a generic sense, and not restricted in applicability to any limiting time frame, i.e. - *"In our Krsna Consciousness movement".* There is no reason why someone receiving and reading this book now would not conclude that this system was still operative within the "Krsna Consciousness movement" TODAY. The only time limit implied in Srila Prabhupada's books is the duration of the *"Krsna Consciousness Movement"* itself.

Why would Srila Prabhupada describe a system that would only have relevance for 2 years, in books which were to remain the standard law for up to ten thousand years? (The *Caitanya Caritamrta* was only fully published in 1975).

It is quite clear Srila Prabhupada never said that the system of initiation, as described in his books, should be restricted to only when he was on the planet. Nor would we expect him to since, as mentioned above, his books were meant to guide the movement and humanity at large for up to the next ten thousand years. Significantly the GBC have never argued- either -that these initiation instructions were only applicable for whilst Srila Prabhupada was on the planet (unlike the July 9th order); indeed they themselves have borrowed some of the details of it for their own concocted M.A.S.S. system.

Thus the initiation system mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books, was intended to be continued for the duration of ISKCON.

This same system was also, of course, outlined in the July 9th letter, with the elaboration of an extra detail not specified in the books - namely the use of priestly representatives to accept the initiates by giving them their spiritual names ON SRILA PRABHUPADA'S BEHALF. Controversy has thus engulfed a very simple issue, purely because this last detail involves the entities who

perform this ceremonial function being given the unusual title - '*ritviks*'.

Thus the burden of proof to justify changing an initiation system that was in existence during Srila Prabhupada's physical presence, and which is also stated in his books for the future of ISKCON, is on the GBC.

One thing however, is for certain. The above quotes from the C.C., outlining the system of initiation within ISKCON, are definitely not applicable to the current guru system. In dissecting the M.A.S.S. we expose below a two stage multi-step process that differs radically from the system Srila Prabhupada sanctioned for ISKCON in his books:

Stage 1

1. New *bhaktas* first accept Srila Prabhupada as their principal *SIKSA* Guru for the first 6 months.
2. Srila Prabhupada's *pranam mantra* will be by chanted during this initial induction period.
3. During this trial period the *bhakta* must demonstrate his ability to follow the 4 regs, chant 16 rounds and attend the morning program.
4. By the end of these 6 months he must pass an examination.
5. Having passed these hurdles satisfactorily, the local temple authority will a recommendation to that effect.
6. The candidate is now qualified to enter stage 2.

Stage 2

1. Entry to Stage 2 signifies that one is ready and qualified to choose a guru.
2. However, the selection can only be made from a list generated through the GBC's elaborate majority vote 'no objection' procedures.
3. When ready, the candidate will make his choice and inform his local authority.
4. The candidate then requires the formal acceptance of his chosen guru.
5. Once this approval is obtained the candidate will change the *pranam mantra* being chanted to that of his newly chosen guru.
6. The purpose of stage 2 is for mutual testing between guru and disciple to determine each others qualifications.
7. One will then have to follow strictly for at least another 6 months.
8. At any time during stage 2, both the prospective disciple and guru can reject each other.
9. At the end of the second 6 month period the local authority must give his formal approval for the initiation to take place.

Even at this stage the guru, if he so wishes, can reject this recommendation and not proceed with the initiation.
(All the above details are taken from 'Gurus and Initiation in ISKCON', GBC, 1995)

Given a multiple *acarya* system, the elaborate procedural arrangements of stage 1 and stage 2 are absolutely essential. The far more streamlined system alluded to by Srila Prabhupada in the above *C.c.* quotes can only be applicable within a 'single-guru' system, where there is just one guru in the movement who is known to everyone, and who will automatically initiate anyone who is willing to follow strictly. This is why Srila Prabhupada makes no mention of the disciple needing to CHOOSE a guru and then obtain permission from the chosen guru before aspiring to him, or of the disciple needing a period to 'test' the guru; steps which would be essential in a new multi-guru system, and without which the system could not function. These stages could only be omitted if there was only ONE initiating Guru, who was always THE SAME PERSON, and who was ALREADY known to be bona-fide. It should be obvious that since such a singular system is described in Srila Prabhupada's books, descriptions which perfectly mirror the system in place when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet, that Guru being referred to must be Srila Prabhupada. Thus Srila Prabhupada's prescribed system differs completely from the current GBC guru system in both essence and detail.

It is also interesting to note that Srila Prabhupada's system was standardised, with initiations being granted automatically providing the basic rules had been followed. Srila Prabhupada is thus outlining a standard system for the duration of ISKCON that can ONLY have HIM as the initiator.

The one thing Srila Prabhupada's books definitely do not mention is the current multiple guru system in ISKCON.

It may be argued that whatever system is given, it was meant to be adapted in accordance with the overriding *'law of disciplic succession'* (as found in letters to Tusta Krishna etc). And that therefore all these other steps do not need to be included. This proposition itself, however, holds a fatal flaw:

Since the original objection to the *ritvik* system was the fact that it lacked reference in Srila Prabhupada's books, the above argument cannot be used, since there is no mention of either the *'law of disciplic succession'* , nor the fact that it must modify the

system of initiation given by Srila Prabhupada, in any of these very same books. Thus the use of this argument would invalidate the very point it was initially put forward to support - that the initiation system used can only be bona fide if it is stated in Srila Prabhupada's books.

Summary

1. The system of initiation for ISKCON is only mentioned a handful of times in Srila Prabhupada's books.
2. When the system is mentioned it is not restricted to any time period.
3. Thus the system must be linked to when the books are in circulation, i.e. pre AND post 1977.
4. The system described must therefore be applicable both pre and post 1977, and the same system used pre-1977 must continue.
5. The system described only matches a *'single guru system',* not a *'multiple guru system'.*
6. The system described assumes the Guru is a constant, since there is no requirement for selection, permission or initial acceptance.
7. Since this description matches perfectly the system in operation pre-77, it can only be referring to Srila Prabhupada as the guru, since he was the ONLY guru then - this is the *ritvik* system.
8. The descriptions in Srila Prabhupada's books are definitely not applicable to the current ISKCON system.
9. That future Gurus can change such a system is not mentioned, in fact it is impossible for them to legitimately do so for however long the *'lawbooks of ISKCON'* remain valid.
10. One cannot argue that the exact details of the current ISKCON guru system needs to be specifically mentioned in Srila Prabhupada's books without contradicting the original objection, i.e., that the *ritvik* system should be rejected since it is not mentioned in the books.

To conclude this section:

The Books definitely do not mention the current ISKCON guru system.

They definitely do mention a system that precisely mirrors the system in place when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet.

Thus the only system of initiation mentioned for ISKCON is the same system that was in place when Srila Prabhupada was on the planet. The same system we are proposing be re-instituted now. This is the *ritvik* system.

There is no mention that the system being described in the books will be invalidated as soon as Srila Prabhupada left his body. Nor is there any mention that the system was to be radically revised to accommodate new gurus as part of a new multi-guru system. On the contrary, the fact that the system is mentioned in ISKCON's 'lawbooks', is evidence that Srila Prabhupada wanted it implemented and continued within ISKCON.

The *Diksa* Guru Cannot Change.

The very notion that the initiation system, as outlined by Srila Prabhupada in his books, can be hijacked and adopted by all future current link *diksa* gurus, in itself raises serious questions. In this final section we show that it is actually impossible for any future *diksa* guru to legitimately operate within the philosophical framework established by Srila Prabhupada.

One characteristic that denotes that initiation has been taken from a specific *Diksa* Guru is the fact that the initiation vows taken relate specifically to that *Diksa* Guru. These vows may differ greatly from one *acharya* to the next- on down the disciplic succession. Thus the 16 rounds and 4 regulative principles package that allow one to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada was unique to him and him alone. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, his spiritual master, had insisted on 64 rounds. If one went back a thousand years one would find gurus in our line preaching a different philosophy, what to speak of initiation vows. Thus successive *diksa* gurus are not restricted to prescribing the same *diksa* vows. If a devotee is required to follow the vows given by a particular *diksa* guru then it can only mean:

That the devotee is initiated by that *diksa* guru.

In ISKCON we have a situation where some people are presented as successor *diksa* gurus to Srila Prabhupada. These successor gurus all follow, and are required to have their disciples follow, Srila Prabhupada's initiation vows. This implies the following sastric rule:

'Successor *diksa* gurus must always follow, and have their disciples follow, exactly the same initiation vows as established by the previous *acarya.*'

The above principle is enshrined in ISKCON law. No future ISKCON guru can legitimately alter these basic initiation vows. This situation will remain for as long as the society exists, which could be up to ten thousand years.

In point of fact the above concocted rule violates Srila Prabhupada's teachings:

"Srimad Viraraghava *Acarya*, an *acarya* in the disciplic succession of the Ramanuja-*sampradaya*, has remarked in his commentary that *candalas*, or conditioned souls who are born in lower than *sudra* families, can also be initiated according to circumstances. The formalities may be slightly changed here and there to make them Vaisnavas."

(*SB*, 4.8.5, purport)

"Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was an ideal *acarya*. An *acarya* is an ideal teacher who knows the purpose of the revealed scriptures, behaves exactly according to their injunctions and teaches his students to adopt these principles also. As an ideal *acarya*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu devised ways to capture all kinds of atheists and materialists. Every *acarya* has a specific means of propagating his spiritual movement with the aim of bringing men to Krsna consciousness. Therefore, the method of one *acarya* may be different from that of another, but the ultimate goal is never neglected. Srila Rupa Gosvami recommends:

tasmat kenapy upayena manah krsne nivesayet

sarve vidhi-nisedha syur etayor eva kinkarah

An *acarya* should devise a means by which people may somehow or other come to Krsna consciousness. First they should become Krsna conscious, and all the prescribed rules and regulations may later gradually be introduced. In our Krsna consciousness movement we follow this policy of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. For example, since boys and girls in the Western countries freely intermingle, special concessions regarding their customs and habits are necessary to bring them to Krsna consciousness. The *acarya* must devise a means to bring them to devotional service. Therefore, although I am a sannyasi I sometimes take part in getting boys and girls married, although in the history of *sannyasa* no *sannyasi* has personally taken part in marrying his disciples."

(*C.c.*, 7:37, purport)

Earlier we saw how, in his books, Srila Prabhupada insisted that all future initiated disciples must be following his prescribed *diksa* rules and regulations.

This point is made again in his last will and testament:

" ... provided the new director is my initiated disciple following strictly all the rules and regulations of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as detailed in my books ... "

(Last Will and Testament)

The above can only mean one of two things:

1. That all future disciples were to be initiated by Srila Prabhupada:
2. That all future initiations were to be conducted by persons who could not function with the basic freedoms and rights Srila Prabhupada taught were available to all bona fide initiating *acarya*s. They would be restricted to initiating their own disciples employing identical terms and conditions to Srila Prabhupada, for the next ten thousand years.

Please note that though there is nothing to prevent one *acarya* having the same initiation standards as the previous *acarya*, it is not obligatory - there is a choice. However, Srila Prabhupada has specifically set up a situation in his society in which there is no choice whatsoever.

It seems that within ISKCON, the type of entities we have presently initiating bare little resemblance to the current-link *diksa* gurus Srila Prabhupada describes in his books. These ISKCON 'entities' are required only to enforce the *diksa* terms and conditions of their predecessor *acarya*, Srila Prabhupada. These are the types of restriction one might expect in a system employing officiating priests, or *ritviks*, but not fully-fledged current-link initiating *acarya*s. According to the GBC then, we have the self-referentially incoherent situation whereby future prospective disciples are supposed to follow Srila Prabhupada's books, but must select *diksa* gurus who are not allowed the basic freedom expressed in these very same books!

"The formalities may be slightly changed here and there to make them Vaisnavas."

"Therefore, the method of one *acarya* may be different from that of another, but the ultimate goal is never neglected."

Nowhere did Srila Prabhupada ever revoke the above sanction with regards bona fide initiating *acarya*s. Thus we know that the entities presently operating in ISKCON cannot be initiating current-link *acarya*s, since they are only allowed to operate within the terms and conditions set out by the predecessor *acarya*, Srila Prabhupada. (The argument that there are *large A* and *small a* initiating *acaryas* is refuted in *'The Final Order'* pages 40-42).

It may be argued that Srila Prabhupada has given a standard that does not need to change for the next ten thousand years, and that that is why he has insisted on this standard for all future initiations. However this is simply avoiding the most obvious

conclusion:

For a guru to institutionalise only his *diksa* standards, is proof that it was his intention to remain the *diksa* guru for as long as that institution existed. In this way Srila Prabhupada has institutionalised himself as the only *diksa* guru for ISKCON, for as long as it exists.

Srila Prabhupada would be contradicting himself quite badly if- on the one hand he asked all his disciples to become the next current-links (current GBC *siddhanta*) and then- at the same time deny them the freedom to change standards. As and when they saw fit; the basic prerogative of any current-link *diksa* guru. One would at least have expected Srila Prabhupada to mention that the above sanction to make changes to standards would not apply to any future *diksa* gurus within ISKCON. The fact that he did not do this further supports our contention that there were not meant to be any future *diksa* gurus within ISKCON- other than Srila Prabhupada.

Further we note the following statements:

> **"As far as the time of *diksa* (initiation) is concerned, everything depends on the position of the guru.[...] If the *sad*-guru, the bona fide spiritual master agrees, one can be initiated immediately, without waiting for a suitable time or place."**
>
> **(*C.c. Madhya*, 24.331, purport)**
>
> **"So without waiting for me, whoever you consider deserves. That will depend on discretion."**
>
> **(SP Room conversation, 7/7/77, Vrindavan)**

In the first quote above Srila Prabhupada states that as far as initiation goes, everything is dependent on the agreement of the *diksa* guru. We then see Srila Prabhupada give that agreement via the July 9th letter. Below he sets the parameters for all future *diksa* guru activity:

> **"Due to the necessity of these activities, we do not immediately initiate disciples in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. For six months, a candidate for initiation must first attend arati and classes in the *sastras*, practice the regulative principles and associate with other devotees. When one is actually advanced in the *purascarya-vidhi*, he is recommended by the local temple president for initiation. It is not that anyone can be suddenly initiated without meeting the requirements. When one is further advanced by chanting the Hare Krsna *mantra* sixteen rounds daily, following the regulative principles and attending classes, he receives the sacred thread (*brahminical* recognition) after the second six months. "**
>
> **(*C.c., Madhya* 15:108)**

Thus according to Srila Prabhupada's books, any future theoretical *'diksa'* gurus:

1. Could not alter *diksa* vows.
2. Could not alter pre-requisite initiation standards, or any other aspects of the initiation process.
3. Could not refuse any disciples initiation - as long as they followed the standards given in Srila Prabhupada's books.
4. Would not need to interact with, or give his permission to accept, any future disciples.

The above system is standard law for the next ten thousand years. This being the case those performing initiation cannot, by definition, be *diksa* gurus since- according to Srila Prabhupada's books- such entities could not have such restrictions imposed upon them.

The above restrictions are nevertheless perfectly befitting a system in which Srila Prabhupada remained the *diksa* guru, with *ritviks* as his representatives.

CONCLUSION

1. Srila Prabhupada's books do not contain any instructions that would invalidate the ritvik system.
2. Srila Prabhupada's books do not contain any instructions that detail the current ISKCON guru system.
3. Srila Prabhupada's books do contain instructions detailing a system fully supporting himself as the only *diksa*guru for ISKCON.
4. Srila Prabhupada's books do contain instructions applicable only if Srila Prabhupada remains ISKCON's *diksa*guru.

Please note that in the above paper we have shown how ontologically through the instructions found in Srila Prabhupada's books, Srila Prabhupada must remain as the *Diksa* Guru for ISKCON. We have also used a similar *'proof by ontology'* on the July 9th letter, to demonstrate how the July 9th letter must also apply post-*samadhi* as well.

EITHER of these proofs alone can be used to resoundingly demonstrate that Srila Prabhupada is the *Diksa* Guru for ISKCON.

Used TOGETHER however, Srila Prabhupada's position as the *Diksa* Guru for ISKCON becomes unassailable.